



Minutes of the Regular Meeting – March 17, 2022
ZOOM MEETING [https://zoom.us/j/955 752 1162](https://zoom.us/j/9557521162)
Meeting ID: ID: 955 752 1162 +1 929 205 6099

1. Call to order: 10:04 a.m. by Denise Savageau, Chair.

Attendance: Members: Denise Savageau (CRCCD Board), Eric Thomas (DEEP), Simon Levesque (DOA), Cheryl Cappiali (SWCD Board), Larry Rousseau (NWCD Board Chairman). Ex-officio members: Thomas Morgart (NRCS), James Hyde (NRCS) and Leigh Whittinghill (CAES). Staff and guests: Lilian Ruiz, (CT Council), Dan Mullins (ECCD), Chris Sullivan (SWCD), Amanda Johnson (CT RC&D), Joanna Shapiro (NCCD), and Cynthia Rabinowitz (NWCD).

2. INTRODUCTION

Savageau opened the meeting and attendees introduced themselves. She introduced Eric Thomas, attending on behalf of DEEP.

3. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Minutes - Minutes of 12/16/21 were reviewed. Motion to approve with corrections on the ECCD report - by L. Rousseau, J. Shapiro second. Approved unanimously as corrected.

B. Treasurer's Report

Savageau reported. The Financial report for the March 10, 2022 was reviewed. Motion to approve and put it on file by C. Rabinowitz, C. Cappiali second. Unanimously approved.

C. Chairman's Report

Savageau shared information about the next State Water Plan programs for the 50th Anniversary of the CT Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act. She also indicated that we still have one opening on the Council for an NGO appointed by the Governor and would like to have this filled to increase diversity. She also stated that with new members coming on the Council, we will delay elections for a while and that our bylaws make provisions for officers to continue until elections are held.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. June meeting date change

Council meeting in June was moved from Thursday June 16 to Thursday June 23.

B. Council Operations Plan

Savageau asked everyone to review the Operations Plan and indicated that we would be updating for review and adoption at the June meeting. Any comments on suggestions on the OP should be provided to us to help with the update.

C. New Grant Opportunities

i. LISFF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (WFNF) has partnered with the LISS and EPA and has hired Throve Environmental manage the application process. Projects must be on nitrogen prevention or reduction planning/design and implementation (LIS watershed), and also for resilience, water quality, education, and fish passage projects in the CT and NY portions of the watershed. A workshop was held with the districts to discuss opportunities. Deadline for applications is May 19, 2022.

i. CIG

T. Morgart described the grant as Federal Assistance in exploring innovative conservation practices and technologies. As an example, they were looking at a technology for precision application of Nitrogen, which may result in up to 50% reduction in the application of N on corn, the largest crop in the state, with great impact in nutrient runoffs and water quality.

ii. Other

T. Morgart had previously shared information on NIFA grant funds, and described the opportunity for districts and other entities to apply for funds to work on outreach to increase the participation in USDA programs in the state, with no match requirement.

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Subaqueous Soil Survey Funding Request

Council has requested \$10.5 MM over 5 years in direct funding for completion of the Coastal Zone Soil Survey in Long Island Sound. Congress passed Appropriations Committee bill awarding 5MM of the 10 requested. Mapping of sub-aqueous soils allows for determining areas for mitigation of climate change impacts on the coastal zone, and provides for great opportunities to rehabilitate wildlife habitats, such as the restoration of shellfish beds. The survey will also guide the work on tidal marshes as well.

B. 2022 Legislative Session

Ruiz testified on behalf of the Council in support of SB 243- And Act to Promote Climate Smart Agriculture. If approved, the bill will reform the Farmland Restoration Grants allowing the Districts to contract with the DOA to deploy dollars for soil health. SB 30, if approved, will bring funding to what's proposed on SB 243. Sullivan asked for support for HB 5283, which proposes to fund magnet schools (agriscience, for example) to attract more out of the district students.

C. Solar Siting on Working and Natural Lands

Savageau and Thomas reported. The STEPS program has not been updated on the website and there are no new developments.

D. Soil Health Committee

Ruiz reported. Soil Health survey for service providers is still open, some results already in. MA is about to approve a SH Action Plan, which can help guide the work in CT. Rabinowitz reported on the plans to use data from the survey to guide the work on fact sheets for all landscapes. Denise remarked that Amanda Johnson developed the survey and is collecting the data, which will hopefully form a basis for the plan.

E. ENVIROTHON

CT Envirothon is going in person with our competition on May 19th at the Tolland Ag Center in Vernon. We were expecting 25 to 30 teams of high school students to attend and were looking for volunteers to help with the event.

F. Update of the E&S Control Guidelines

Savageau reported. Draft shared with working groups. Still looking at some of the concepts.

G. Grant Updates

a. LISW-RCPP Progress Update

Ruiz reported that the grant is at the NRCS' NHQ to be closed. Denise thanked Lilian for her work on the grant.

b. Source Water Protection Cooperative Agreement

Ruiz reported. Meetings with UCONN CLEAR and EPA to work on the model that determines ranking of each parcel for source water protection. Dan Mullins reported on the ECCD portion of the grant. Series of workshops on soil health was really well attended and should continue. Chris Sullivan reported on the Farm River project, which has been finalized, and is moving on to implementation. They received funding for conceptual design of a greenway trail along the Farm River in New Heaven, and are submitting a 319 proposal for one of the projects that came up from the plan.

c. NACD Technical Assistance Grant

Ruiz reported. Districts will be applying for the 2022 TA grant. All districts expressing that the grant has generated great conservation work, and that the continuation of funds is important.

d. LISS Watershed Operations Grant – Council/DEEP submitted

Savageau reported that we are being funded \$100k for DEEP, The Council and the Audubon CT to develop a Watershed Operations PL-566 to protect shellfish beds in the LIS, by looking into the water quality of the stormwater coming into the sound to understand how stormwater affects them. Council signed the contract with DEEP and we are waiting on the final sign off. Upcoming meeting to discuss how to move forward on this with the NRCS. Denise remarked that there will be more funding coming in for watershed operations for upstream and downstream projects.

e. LISFF Grant – district awarded

C. Sullivan reported. LISFF grant were still waiting to hear from NFWF after responses to follow up questions on the award by SWCD.

6. AGENCY REPORTS

A. DEEP: Ertic Thomas reported

- i. EPA has approved the new statewide TMDL for Lake Nutrients. This includes the Bantam Lake TMDL and also a Watershed-Based Plan. All of these documents are on the DEEP website ([link](#)).
 - ii. CWA Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management grants – DEEP completed FY22 RFP, and submitted applications are under review towards a statewide grant application to EPA; awards could be announced this summer with contracting available after October 1st.
 - iii. Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report – DEEP Water staff working on biennial 2022 draft, anticipating public comment period in the Spring. A reminder to Council members to sign up for the DEEP Water Quality Planning listserv with occasional messages including announcement of IWQR, etc.; [Water Quality Planning ListServ \(ct.gov\)](#)
 - iv. LISS project: DEEP is revising both the Erosion & Sediment Control and the Stormwater Quality Manuals; drafts were shared with the Work Group, and DEEP is still reviewing comments for both.
 - v. I did not mention this, but DEEP has posted notice of the draft General Permit for CAFOs is posted. Written comments can be submitted ASAP, I think by March 21st. [General Permit for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations \(ct.gov\)](#).
- B. NRCS: Tom Morgart reported
- i. The USDA announced the availability of funding for Climate Smart Commodities. One billion dollars will be available. For more details, here is the link, <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1898239>
 - ii. NRCS is working towards obligating their initial allocation of EQIP, AMA, CSP, and ACEP. EQIP, AMA, and ACEP all have more applications that they can fund and they will be putting in a request for additional funding to cover some of the unfunded applications.
- C. CAES: Leigh Whittinghill reported.
- i. Scientists from Forestry and Horticulture, Analytical Chemistry, and Environmental Science have meet with UConn research groups developing sensors and probes for in situ monitoring of soil quality and health. There is hope to develop some collaborations between CAES and the UConn group.
 - ii. She has been meeting with some Analytical Chemistry folks about a Bridgeport Brownfield redevelopment project in the hope of remediating soils and getting a sheep farming project going.
 - iii. Working with DoAg and others on the Urban Agriculture Webinar Series. The next couple are on grant writing. She shared the short form announcement. [REGISTER by following this link!](#) More information on the series can be found [HERE](#) as it develops.
 - iv. Citations for the nanoparticle research related to wetlands:
 - a. Qu, H., C. Ma, W. Xing, L. Xue, H. Liu, Jason C. White, G. Chen, and B. Xing. 2021. Effects of copper oxide nanoparticles on Salix growth, soil enzyme activity and microbial community composition in a wetland mesocosm.
 - b. Journal of Hazardous Materials, 127676.
 There is quite a lot of other work on nanoparticles at the station, much of it is focused on plant systems.
 - v. Jumping Worm publication: [https://portal.ct.gov https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CAES/DOCUMENTS/Publications/Fact_Sheets/Entomology/Jumping-worms-in-Connecticut.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CAES/DOCUMENTS/Publications/Fact_Sheets/Entomology/Jumping-worms-in-Connecticut.pdf)

- vi. The urban tree project for Dr. Susanna Keriö as PI is “Early Detection of Urban Maple Decline Syndrome Based on Non-Structural Carbohydrate (NSC) Levels in Association with Site and Tree Growth Metrics in Urban Environments” it was funded for the Magnarelli Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program. Co PIs are Dr. Nubia Zuverza-Mena and Dr. Leigh Whittinghill
 - vii. Will try and have more of an update for the Aquatic Invasives work for the next meeting.
- D. DoAg: Simon Levesque reported.
- i. CT Dept of Ag Farmland Preservation has submitted 12 farms on 809 total acres of farmland for 2022 ACEP-ALE funding from NRCS.
 - ii. Farmland Restoration Grant is now open to applicants on the CT DOAG grants website: please visit www.ctgrown.gov/grants for more information, including who can apply, how to apply, how projects are chosen and other frequently asked questions
- E. SWCD: Chris Sullivan reported. SWCD had finalized Farm River Greenway trail concept designs and did presentation to community. Mayor is investigating use of ARPA funds to start implementing the trail. Working in the Mill River watershed on the Urban Waters \$\$ from CT DEEP and have a Project WET training scheduled and are finalizing a QAPP to CT DEEP for review for Bacteria analysis lab. Also mentioned the NACD grant and that Melissa (SWCD staff) is a panelist for World Water Day event.
- F. ECCD: Dan Reported
- i. Project Oceanology NOAA B-WET Grant Partnership – ECCD is collaborating with Project Oceanology to plan and install 6-9 outdoor learning spaces over the next 3 years. Currently, we are working with Barrows STEM Academy in Windham to install raised bed gardens, a composting bin, a rain garden and educational signs.
 - ii. Green Schoolyards - with funding from Community Foundation of Eastern CT, ECCD is installing two green schoolyards, one in Windham and the second in Putnam. The projects include stormwater treatment practices, pollinator habitat, gardens and development of interpretive signs.
 - iii. Little River Agricultural Waste Storage & Management Project – in partnership with CT DEEP and NRCS, ECCD is installing a free-stall barn with manure storage and management facilities. The project is nearly complete and the farmer has moved his cows into the barn (funded by CT DEEP through an EPA CWA §319 Grant and NRCS EQIP).
 - iv. CSWC Source Water Grant, Little River and Muddy Brook Water Quality Plan update – work continues to update the plan so the Little River watershed will be eligible under NRCS’ National Water Quality Initiative (NRCS funding administered by CSWC).
 - v. Shewville Fishway Design – SLR International has completed the design of the fishway, which will be located on Shewville Brook in Ledyard, CT. ECCD hopes to construct the fishway this summer, but a primary landowner who was providing an easement for the fishway passed away prior to executing the easement (funded by LISFF and an Electric Boat Mitigation Fund administered by CT DEEP).
- G. NCCD: Joanna Shapiro reported on the work they’re doing.
- H. NWCD: Cynthia Rabinowitz reported.

- i. Co-sponsoring 2nd Annual CT. Compost Conference – virtual again this year. The conference will take place on 3/23 and 3/30 with field trips scheduled for 4/2, 4/29, 5/7 and 6/25.
 - ii. Plant sale and Envirothon always a big part of the focus at this time of year.
 - iii. Construction site inspections continuing as normal and non-point source pollution consultations and education.
 - iv. NWCD received its first request from DEEP under our MOA to inspect a solar installation site in North Canaan. It is a small installation on 11 acres. Dan and Joanna have been very generous in sharing their wisdom from their experiences with the solar inspection program.
 - v. Leeane (NWCD's Ag. Tech under NACD TA grant) is leading an effort for NWCD to partner with Farmington River Coordinating Committee and the Town of Winchester on a multi-pronged effort during the Fall River clean-up, and Farmington River Day; includes outreach and education projects in the Mad and Still River corridors in Winsted; project includes outreach to the Business Community to enroll businesses to actively participate in keeping the downtown areas free of trash and spills, etc., and to school students and residents.
 - vi. NWCD continuing to partner with Jim Hyde (NRCS) and Amanda Johnson (CT-RC&D) to promote and increase no-till practices and cover cropping in NWCT. Currently working on increasing the availability of farm access to equipment needed for these practices.
 - vii. NWCD is partnering with Litchfield Co. NRCS to create a Women Farmers group. Kick-off event is 3/31 and will focus on networking, soil health presentation, soil testing, soil texture analysis demo., and soil microscopy demonstration to show the microbial activity in samples of soil. There will also be a pot-luck lunch.
 - viii. Kelsey (NWCD) and Melisa (SWCD) developing a story map for the State Implementation Workgroup's Education and Outreach Subgroup, for the 50th Anniversary of Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act.
 - ix. We have applied for a grant from NACD to do urban agriculture projects in Torrington.
- I. CACD/NACD: Denise Savageau reported. She shared the State Water Plan programs for the 50th Anniversary of the CT Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act, to be held in May and June 2022. She led the planning for the event.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – no comments

8. ADJOURN –The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 PM.